

# REPATRIATION OF CUBANS INTERDICTED ON THE HIGH SEAS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I call to the attention of the Senate, and specifically to the Foreign Relations Committee, the question of whether or not longstanding policy has been changed by the administration with regard to the repatriation of Cubans interdicted on the high seas.

As we know, since 1995 we have had an understanding with the Castro Cuban Government that when Cubans are interdicted on the high seas, they will be returned to Cuba and they will not be imprisoned.

Clearly, we saw a change with the hijacking of a ferry boat a couple months ago. They were returned to Cuba, and without a trial they were summarily executed.

Naturally, this has made us much more sensitive to the question about these very brave citizens of Cuba who are trying to flee the Castro regime. So it brings up the instance of 2 weeks ago.

Three dock security guards were overpowered. A boat was stolen by some dozen Cuban citizens. On their way across the Straits of Florida, they were interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard. In returning them, it appears there was a negotiation by our Government with the Castro government that they would receive prison sentences of up to 10 years at the discretion of the Cuban Government.

This appears to be a subtle change in policy. Was it a hijacking? It was the stealing of a boat. But the long and the short of it is, the U.S. Government was negotiating directly to send these Cubans going back to Cuba into a prison sentence that could be as much as 10 years. I do not think this is right.

Under these circumstances, it seems to me that at least the U.S. Government, this administration, should have considered the alternative of a third country for these people. Having been sent back, to go back into Castro's prisons, you know their fate.

I am asking Senator LUGAR and Senator BIDEN of the Foreign Relations Committee to investigate this matter. Let us determine if this is really in the best interest of what we are trying to achieve when people are leaving a repressive dictatorship, seeking freedom, and then it appears that the U.S. Government is negotiating their own prison sentence. I do not think that should be the policy of the U.S. Government.

## THE BILL SCHERLE POST OFFICE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Senate and the House of Representatives have passed S. 1399, legislation that names the Glenwood, IA Post Office for former Iowa Congressman William J. Scherle. I understand that the President will soon sign that measure—I hope this week.

Congressman Bill Scherle—or Bill, as his friends call him—and his wife Jane

live on their family farm just outside of Henderson, IA, in Mills County. Glenwood is the county seat of Mills County. Bill served 4 terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, beginning with 3 terms in 1967 in what was then Iowa's 7th Congressional District, and a term in the redistricted 5th Congressional District. I think it is appropriate that Glenwood's Post Office will soon permanently bear Congressman Scherle's name.

Bill long served this Nation. He started with military service in the navy and Coast Guard during World War II, then afterward served in the Naval Reserve. He chaired the Mills County Republican Party for almost a decade starting in 1956. He served in the Iowa legislature from 1960 through 1966. He then was elected to the U.S. Congress and served through 1974, including service on the Education and Labor Committee as well as on the Appropriations Committee. His public service continued in 1975 and 1976, when he was appointed to a senior position at the Department of Agriculture.

In January 1968, North Korea seized the USS *Pueblo*, imprisoning and torturing the crew. Congressman Scherle led the effort in Congress to free the crew of the *Pueblo*. I have always admired Bill's tenacity in never letting the *Pueblo* crew be forgotten. Bill was the only member of Congress invited to attend *Pueblo* reunions, and, as their health has allowed, Bill and Jane always have attended.

Bill and I are at different places on the political spectrum, and I ran against him for Congress twice. He won the first time, and I won the rematch. We disagreed on many issues, but I always understood that he acted on the basis of strongly held views about what he considered were the best interests of those he represented and of the Nation.

Long after we ran as opponents, I got to know Bill and visited on his farm. He is a good person who cares deeply about his community and rural America. Politics has always had a certain amount of rough and tumble.

But while Bill was certainly a good Republican who wanted to see consistent victories for the GOP, he also could see the good in all people.

One area of our mutual interest was the Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs. Bill always did what he could for the school my brother attended years ago, and for deaf people in general.

Congressman Scherle always cared about children and their welfare. He wrote a children's book, "The Happy Barn." He gave away thousands of copies to schools, hospitals and individual families in Southwest Iowa and the Omaha area, reading to young children time after time. He had lots of fun reading to children, and I believe that there are few more valuable things we can do as adults than to read to children and get them started on that most important activity.

Bill was a businessman and farmer, proud of both professions. He received

the Alegent Health Mercy Hospital Heritage Award for his contributions to business in Southwest Iowa.

Bill Scherle remains a good father to his two sons, and a good husband to his wife of 55 years, Jane. He is blessed with six grandchildren—five girls and a boy. Bill has lived a dedicated life, full of patriotism, family and public service. I am please that my colleague, Senator GRASSLEY, joins me in sponsoring this legislation. Congressman KING introduced the companion legislation in the House of Representatives, which was cosponsored by the entire Iowa delegation.

I thank my colleagues for helping us all to honor Congressman Bill Scherle, and I look forward to hearing that the President has signed this bill—hopefully this week.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the Senate will be asked to approve two free-trade agreements with respect to Singapore and Chile. I expect the Senate will approve both trade agreements by very wide margins. I intend to oppose both and wanted to explain why. It is not the case that I believe a free-trade agreement with Singapore is inappropriate. It is not the case that I believe a free-trade agreement with Chile is inappropriate. It is the case, however, that this country has a trade regime that is in total chaos and it is a significant mess.

For 20 years, under Republican and Democratic administrations, we have seen our trade deficit ratchet way up. We now have the largest trade deficit in human history that has occurred anywhere on the globe. It has been rising very rapidly. Instead of fixing the problems that exist in international trade and demanding fair trade and demanding from our allies fair trade treatment and doing something to prevent the erosion of American jobs which, incidentally, are now moving overseas at a rapid pace, we have trade negotiators rushing across the world trying to do new agreements.

I say fix the old agreements before we start running around doing new agreements. The reason we are going to consider new agreements today under something called fast track is that Congress decided to handcuff itself and agree to a procedure by which no amendments will be able to be offered to either free-trade agreement.

Singapore is a tiny nation of 3 million people a half a world away. We already have a very favorable trade relationship with Singapore. It has little manufacturing and little agriculture. It is wide open to imported goods. Singapore is not an example of a trade problem for us. So it does not matter much to me whether we have a free-trade agreement with Singapore.

The trade ambassador has brought us an 800-page free-trade agreement with Singapore. But demonstrative of the problem we have created for ourselves is a small provision in the free-trade agreement with Singapore that provides an authorization for the opportunity for Singapore to send to our